

Wigton Infant School

Longthwaite Road, Wigton, Cumbria CA7 9JR

Inspection dates

12–13 February 2019

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged to make the strong progress of which they are capable.
- Leaders have taken steps to improve teaching and learning in writing. These improvements are still developing, but are having an impact, and pupils' progress is improving.
- In mathematics, work is sometimes too challenging for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- Pupils' work is sometimes untidy, careless and difficult to read.
- Leaders have not ensured that the school's website meets statutory requirements.
- Some middle leaders are inexperienced in leadership. They are developing the skills required to enable them to have a greater impact on curriculum planning, teaching and learning.
- Newly appointed governors are developing the skills and expertise required to challenge leaders.
- Leaders have taken positive steps to improve attendance, but some pupils miss school very regularly. This affects their learning.
- Whole-school improvement plans developed by leaders lack specific criteria by which leaders can measure success.

The school has the following strengths

- The newly established leadership team has planned a curriculum which develops pupils as enthusiastic learners who are keen to discover.
- Leaders are taking effective steps to improve teaching and standards are rising.
- Leaders have raised morale across the school. Hard-working staff are committed to further improving outcomes for pupils.
- Inclusion and nurture lie at the heart of the school's ethos. All are encouraged to thrive.
- Children get off to a flying start in early years, settling quickly and making good progress.
- Leaders ensure that all pupils are safe in school. Pupils' welfare and well-being take a high priority.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, by:
 - further developing the skills of middle leaders so that they continue to have an impact on raising standards in teaching and learning
 - sharpening improvement planning so that it enables leaders and governors to check accurately whether improvements are on track across the course of the year
 - strengthening the skills and knowledge of the governing body
 - ensuring that the school's website makes available all statutorily required information for parents and carers.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, by:
 - ensuring that the most able pupils are consistently challenged to enable them to make the progress of which they are capable
 - planning activities in mathematics which match the needs and abilities of pupils with SEND
 - ensuring that pupils present their work neatly across the curriculum
 - developing the approach to teaching writing to ensure that all pupils, including the most able, develop their skills.
- Improve the attendance of the small number of pupils who are persistently absent from school.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how the school may improve this aspect of its work.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since his appointment in September 2017, the headteacher has successfully shared his vision with staff and governors for an inclusive school which lives out its school motto, 'learning, laughter and love'. Through a carefully planned and engaging curriculum, leaders develop pupils as curious and questioning learners, who are keen to explore and discover.
- Morale in the school has improved rapidly. All leaders and staff are focusing on improving teaching and learning. Staff have adopted the changes that leaders have made, including teaching pupils to develop a deeper understanding and confidence in mathematics.
- Leaders have improved teaching by providing a wide range of training opportunities for staff to develop and enhance their skills. Staff watch each other teach and work with professionals from other schools. This has had a positive impact on improving teaching in mathematics and standards have risen. Staff welcome this training and are keen to improve their skills further, including in teaching writing.
- Leaders have been resolute in their determination to raise standards. The changes that they have made are having an impact, although the most able pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable. Leaders are thoughtful and reflective. They regularly evaluate the impact of the changes that they have made and are taking steps to secure further improvement in teaching and learning. They are ambitious for standards to rise further, including for the most able pupils.
- A newly introduced system to check how well pupils are achieving is used regularly by leaders. They use this information to help them to plan additional support for pupils falling behind.
- Middle leaders are enthusiastic and have developed and improved curriculum plans across Years 1 and 2. Some middle leaders are new to their roles. With support from the local authority, they are developing their skills in monitoring teaching and learning. This work is at an early stage of development and so is not fully effective in promoting improvements in teaching and learning, including for the most able pupils.
- Leaders regularly evaluate the impact of funding for disadvantaged pupils. They make regular checks to ensure that any additional support is having the impact that it should. Provision is carefully planned, including additional support for pupils' emotional well-being, when needed.
- Leaders have taken steps to improve provision for pupils with SEND by providing an inclusive environment, where pupils work alongside their peers. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) makes regular and detailed checks on the impact of additional funding in improving outcomes for this group of pupils. When needed, the school seeks useful external support from other professionals, including educational psychologists and speech therapists. As a result, the progress for this group of pupils is improving. However, further improvements are needed in mathematics teaching for pupils with SEND.

- Leaders use the physical education (PE) and sport premium to build pupils' confidence and skills, and to widen their experiences. Pupils develop their skills in a wide range of sports and activities, including dance, football and gymnastics. Leaders ensure that pupils are given the opportunity to visit other schools to take part in competitions and events. Staff make regular checks on pupils' skills development to ensure that teaching is promoting learning effectively.
- Leaders support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well through a wide range of lessons, assemblies and events. Pupils learn about other cultures and religions. Staff raise pupils' awareness of environmental issues through activities such as litter picking and reducing plastic waste.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has undergone significant change since the headteacher's appointment. Some governors are new to the role, including the chair of governors. There are currently three vacancies on the governing body.
- Recent changes to the governing body mean that most governors are still developing their knowledge of the role. Some governors have attended recent training to improve their skills, including safeguarding. However, governors lack the skills and experience to effectively hold leaders to account.
- Governors are developing their understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Leaders provide governors with information about teaching and learning across the school. However, leaders' school development plans do not use information about pupils' achievement sharply enough to set measurable targets. This limits the effectiveness with which governors can hold leaders to account for improvements.
- Governors monitor the school's budget and check the impact of spending decisions on pupils' learning, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. They visit the school regularly to ensure that safeguarding procedures are effective.
- At the time of the inspection, the school's website did not contain the full range of information for parents which is statutorily required, including information about governance and safeguarding.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose, including record keeping. Statutory checks are in place to ensure the suitability of adults working in school. Appropriate checks are made on visitors when they arrive at the school.
- Leaders ensure that pupils' safety is a high priority and that staff are vigilant. They make sure staff receive regular and appropriate training to identify any signs of possible danger or potential abuse, including for pupils with SEND. Leaders have created a safe and caring culture in which pupils feel confident that they have someone to talk with if they are worried. Pupils spoken with during the inspection said that they feel safe in school and know that they should speak to a trusted adult if they feel worried.

- Through the curriculum, pupils learn how to keep themselves safe online and in the wider community, including road safety and fire safety. Staff teach pupils how to respond in an emergency.
- The procedures for reporting any incidents or concerns are very clear and understood by staff, who provide timely support when pupils are at risk. Staff know families very well and provide a wide range of support and guidance to parents and carers. The school works well with other agencies to make sure that pupils are safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning is improving rapidly, particularly in mathematics. However, across the curriculum, teaching lacks challenge for the most able pupils. This means that these pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Leaders have improved assessment systems across the school. Teachers work with each other and with other schools to ensure that their checks on pupils' learning are accurate. Staff meet very regularly with leaders to discuss pupils' progress and to plan additional support when needed. Support is provided in a timely way to enable pupils to catch up.
- Pupils develop their phonics skills and read with confidence and fluency. They are able to use their knowledge to sound out unknown words. Teachers and teaching assistants check pupils' learning regularly to ensure that phonics teaching is matched to pupils' needs.
- Most pupils make good progress in their reading. This is because teachers read with pupils very regularly and plan activities which develop pupils' reading comprehension skills. Classroom reading areas are very well resourced, containing a wide range of interesting and attractive books. Pupils read with fluency and enjoyment. Checks on pupils' work show that teachers do not provide sufficient challenge for the most able pupils to make even more progress in their reading.
- Teachers plan interesting and engaging lessons to inspire pupils' writing. For example, Year 1 pupils wrote crime scene reports involving Goldilocks. Pupils are enthusiastic writers and write for a range of different purposes. They apply their phonics skills well when spelling unfamiliar words. However, some pupils do not choose ambitious and varied vocabulary to make their writing interesting to read. Pupils' use of punctuation does not develop strongly over time. Leaders are taking steps to improve pupils' writing still further, including the most able pupils, who do not make strong progress.
- Leaders have improved teaching and learning in mathematics and standards have risen. Teachers ensure that pupils develop their confidence in number. They have plenty of practice in written calculations, using practical resources to develop their understanding. However, the most able pupils do not make the progress that they should. This is because they have not developed the skills needed to tackle tricky and challenging problems. In mathematics, teachers sometimes plan work that is too difficult for pupils with SEND and this means that these pupils, at times, do not make the progress of which they are capable.

- Leaders have taken steps to improve pupils' handwriting. Some pupils write neatly, but others produce untidy work. In mathematics, careless presentation of work by some pupils sometimes leads to errors in their written calculations.
- Across the school, teachers and teaching assistants provide a wide range of well-planned support for pupils with SEND. Staff know these pupils well and support individuals and small groups with their learning, including pupils with education, health and care (EHC) plans. Carefully planned provision develops pupils' skills and knowledge in a range of areas, including speech and language, and social skills. Pupils with specific needs use a range of resources, including the well-appointed sensory room. In lessons, adults use questioning effectively to check pupils' understanding. Teachers encourage pupils to develop their independence in learning and work alongside their peers. The SENCo keeps a careful check on pupils' progress, through regular meetings with staff. She ensures that the pupils with SEND have appropriate plans which contain precise targets for learning and development. This has led to improvements in progress for pupils with SEND, although this is sometimes weaker in mathematics.
- Across the curriculum, teachers plan a range of interesting trips and activities to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding. For example, in history, pupils visit a local castle to bring their learning to life. Pupils are enthusiastic learners and value the many opportunities they have for outdoor learning. They learn about local wildlife and can name and recognise a range of native birds.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders instil in pupils an appreciation of nature and the beauty of the world around them. Through a well-planned programme of lessons and activities, pupils learn to value the outdoors as a place of calm, peace and wonder.
- In forest school sessions, pupils develop a wide range of skills, including teamwork and resilience. Pupils describe their outdoor learning as 'awesome' and 'fun and exciting'.
- Staff teach pupils about different values, including respect. Pupils think about how they can show such values through their own words and actions. For example, pupils describe respect as, 'being fair', 'saying hello', 'listening' and 'thinking about others'.
- Through philosophy lessons, staff teach pupils to be reflective and thoughtful. Pupils ask and consider challenging questions, for example, 'whether you should have the internet in your home'. Through such opportunities, pupils develop the skills to consider different opinions and to listen respectfully to others.
- Pupils develop a knowledge of environmental issues, including the importance of reducing plastic use. They show their enthusiasm for caring for the school environment by litter picking in the playground and tidying up their resources in school.
- Through a well-planned programme of lessons and assemblies, pupils develop an appreciation of their local and wider community. They learn to value differences and to develop tolerance towards others. Staff teach pupils about other religions; for example,

through visitors and lessons, they learn about Islam. As one pupil said, 'It would be boring if we were all the same.'

- Pupils learn about democracy by presenting their ideas to their class and being elected to the school council. They take part in decision making, such as for improvements to the playgrounds.
- Staff teach pupils to stay safe both online and in the wider community. Pupils value lessons and assemblies about online safety and can describe with confidence how to stay safe. The pupils spoken with during the inspection are confident that staff listen to any concerns that they have and take action to help them.
- Through the curriculum, pupils develop a clear understanding of how to choose a healthy lifestyle, including diet, exercise and well-being. Year 2 pupils described in detail the different food groups needed for a balanced diet. Pupils enjoy a wide range of sports and activities to keep active.
- Staff give pupils a wide variety of opportunities to develop their independence and resilience. Pupils enjoy visits to the Lake District to take part in outdoor learning activities.
- Pupils develop their confidence, skills and interests through a wide range of after-school activities, including nature, drama, drawing and cooking clubs.
- Through carefully planned nurture provision, leaders provide vulnerable pupils with additional support and therapy. Staff work with parents, and other professionals, to ensure that the provision is appropriate and effective.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- A strong ethos of care and respect between staff and pupils is evident across the school.
- Leaders have created a calm and friendly atmosphere. Pupils move around the school with consideration for others. At playtimes, pupils play well together and follow instructions from adults.
- In classes, pupils are keen to do their best and answer questions well. They listen respectfully to their peers. Pupils quickly follow instructions from teachers. In a small number of classes, low-level misbehaviour is a result of work being too easy or too difficult for some pupils.
- Staff have considerable expertise in SEND provision and understand that some pupils need additional support for behavioural needs. Teachers plan provision carefully, for example, in teaching pupils social skills such as turn-taking and listening.
- Pupils report that incidents of bullying are rare, and that staff deal with any misbehaviour. In each class, pupils agree class rules at the start of the year which they understand clearly. Staff, pupils and parents agree that pupils' behaviour is good.
- Whole-school attendance is in line with the national average. Pupils enjoy school and value their education. However, a small number of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, have high rates of persistent absence. Leaders have been

proactive in taking steps to improve attendance, including regular contact with parents, through letters and meetings. Most parents understand how important it is for their children to attend school regularly. However, some pupils miss school too often due to term-time holidays.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Leaders have taken steps to improve the teaching of writing and standards are rising. Pupils write with enjoyment and for a range of different purposes. The changes made are recent and still being developed by leaders and teachers. Some pupils, including the most able, do not make consistently good progress.
- In Year 1, pupils' attainment in the phonics screening check is in line with the national average. Teachers plan regular activities to develop pupils' phonics skills, including reading regularly with adults. Pupils learn to read regularly, fluently and for pleasure. They value the wide range of engaging and attractive books in their classrooms and the school library.
- Teachers develop the independence and confidence of pupils with SEND by providing them with a range of appropriate resources to support their learning. Teaching assistants provide caring and nurturing support for individual pupils and small groups.
- In mathematics, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard by the end of Year 2 has risen rapidly and is now in line with national averages. Pupils enjoy mathematics. As a result of the changes that leaders have made, most develop confidence and accuracy in written calculations. Some pupils with SEND make less progress than they are capable of in mathematics as the work that teachers plan is sometimes too difficult.
- In reading, writing and mathematics, the proportion of pupils reaching greater depth has been below national averages over time. Recent improvements to teaching are beginning to improve the progress that the most able pupils make. However, progress for these pupils is not consistently good.
- Pupils learn to be thoughtful and resilient learners. Through a wide variety of outdoor learning experiences, pupils develop a love of exploring and investigating.
- Leaders have planned an interesting and varied curriculum which helps pupils learn about their community and the wider world. Through trips to local woodland, the seaside, castles and museums, pupils develop a secure understanding of local area geography and history. By learning about global topics such as Fairtrade and plastic pollution, pupils learn to see beyond their immediate community.
- Pupils leave the school with a good understanding of British values and how these relate to their own lives and actions. For example, pupils can link individual liberty to being able to choose their own books to read or which playground equipment to use.
- Leaders have taken steps to improve pupils' handwriting across the school. However, there is inconsistency in the standard of pupils' handwriting. Pupils' workbooks sometimes contain untidy work, including in mathematics and English.

- Through journaling lessons, pupils learn to observe, question and wonder. They develop their drawing skills, sketching careful pencil drawings of birds, natural landscapes and autumn leaves.
- Leaders develop pupils' knowledge of healthy lifestyles, including keeping active. All pupils represent the school in inter-school competitions and events, including multi-skills and gymnastics.

Early years provision

Good

- Leaders have provided a warm, safe and nurturing learning environment for children in Reception. Both classrooms are extremely well resourced. Staff give children a wide range of opportunities to play, explore and investigate.
- Children are attentive and keen to learn. They play cooperatively and with sustained concentration, chatting happily in the different areas of learning. Children listen respectfully to adults and their peers and follow instructions carefully. They move around the classrooms calmly and use equipment safely and with care.
- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of Reception is below the national average. Most children join early years with skills and knowledge that are below those typical for their age. As a result of well-planned learning opportunities, children make good progress from their varied starting points. Leaders make regular and detailed checks on children's learning.
- Leaders have planned an engaging curriculum for children in early years. Staff make imaginative use of the spacious and engaging outdoor area to enable children to explore, investigate and develop curiosity and wonder about nature. In regular forest school sessions, children are filled with enthusiasm and awe as they learn and play. Skilled and knowledgeable staff develop children's understanding of environmental issues.
- Staff provide activities for children to develop their fine motor skills and get ready to write. For example, children thread beads, use scissors and form modelling clay into different shapes. During the inspection, children were cutting, sticking and colouring valentine hearts with great care and precision. Outdoors, children used chalk to write numbers on the playground.
- Children write very regularly and for different purposes. Leaders make full use of the outdoor area to inspire children's writing. As a result, writing outcomes have improved, particularly for boys. Children's workbooks show that they make good progress in their writing. They practise their skills regularly and use their developing phonics skills to sound out words.
- Teachers plan daily phonics lessons to ensure that children develop their early reading skills. Reading areas are cosy and inviting. Staff provide children with a wide range of bright and attractive picture books. Children enjoy sitting and sharing books together and teachers read to children very regularly. Through these opportunities, children develop an enjoyment of reading. Staff send reading books home regularly, with additional guidance and support for parents to support their child with reading.
- In mathematics, children develop and deepen their understanding of number through a wide range of practical activities. They develop their written skills, writing digits

carefully. Children investigate mathematics in their play. During the inspection, children were carefully counting out coins in the role-play café.

- Leaders meet with other providers and parents to make sure that children make a smooth and successful start to school. Children settle quickly.
- Staff work closely with other professionals to provide the right additional support for children with SEND, and disadvantaged children. Staff plan provision carefully for children with complex needs, including those with EHC plans. For example, children receive additional speech and language support, visit the well-resourced sensory room and have additional reading support. Staff have a wide range of skills and expertise which they use to support children well.
- Through questioning and discussion, staff challenge and develop children's thinking. Staff develop children's language skills by engaging them in conversation.
- Staff in early years keep their skills and knowledge up to date through regular training provided by leaders, including safeguarding and first aid. The early years leader works well with colleagues from other schools to share her knowledge and develop her expertise.
- Parents have a very positive view of early years and appreciate regular communication with teachers. As one parent said, 'Staff are welcoming and accessible.'
- The indoor and outdoor learning environments in early years are safe and secure. Staff carry out regular risk assessments to check that equipment and classroom areas are safe.

School details

Unique reference number	112126
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10090527

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	174
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elaine Lynch
Headteacher	Geoff Norman
Telephone number	01697 342649
Website	www.wigtoninf.cumbria.sch.uk
Email address	head@wigtoninf.cumbria.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6–7 February 2007

Information about this school

- A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The governing body has undergone significant changes, including a new chair of governors.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is lower than the national average.
- The school has resourced provision places for four pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes. Some sessions were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- An inspector met with four representatives of the governing body, including the vice-chair.
- An inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors met with the school council and talked with pupils in classes and around the school.
- An inspector listened to a small number of pupils read from Year 2.
- Inspectors met with a group of middle leaders and the early years leader.
- An inspector met with the SENCo.
- A range of pupils' books and tracking records were scrutinised by inspectors.
- Inspectors spoke with a number of parents to seek their views.
- The inspectors scrutinised a variety of documentation, including the school's own self-evaluation and development plan, minutes of governing body meetings and records relating to pupils' attendance. A range of documentation regarding safeguarding was also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Elizabeth Stevens, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Gill Burrow	Ofsted Inspector
Stephen Rigby	Ofsted Inspector

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